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CHARLES DAVIS'S RAGTIME INDEX WILL RESUME IN OUR NEXT ISSUE. SPACE REASONS THAT WILL BE OBVIOUS TO ALL READERS PREVENTED US CARRYING IT IN THIS ISSUE OF THE RAGTIMER.

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non-profit corporation having the following objects;

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

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A reminder, if you haven't already circled the dates on your kitchen calendar. The 1984 Ragtime Bash will be held at Toronto's Cara Inn (the same location as the last few years) on Oct. 19-20-21.

Some who enjoyed last year's Bash made their 1984 reservations at the Cara Inn before they departed. That's ragtime devotion for you!

This issue salutes someone who has introduced ragtime to more people than anyone else living: Max Morath. His television productions, which were brilliantly written and produced, are still seen frequently. Years after Max brought people like Eubie Blake in front of a television camera, his TV specials are a unique blend of entertainment and instant history.

We owe him a great deal.

A footnote: If you haven't had an opportunity to send in your 1984 membership yet, why not do it today?

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Max Morath

THE FINEST RAGTIME ENTERTAINER OF THEM ALL

By Jack Hutton

On Sunday afternoon, April 8, 1984, Max Morath performed a small miracle through his stage ragtime show at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall. He made a convert out of a 19-year-old Grateful Dead worshipper who didn't even attend his concert.

I know because I'm talking about my daughter, Sue. Let me tell you about it.

You knew before you went to Roy Thomson Hall that Max would be a smash hit with the Toronto audience. He had to be because a large segment of the audience were Ragtime Society members. And Max, probably the most popular ragtime entertainer of all time, has a genius for involving others who don't know the slightest thing about ragtime.

My big surprise was waiting for me later at home.

Sue had agreed earlier to tape a CBC live broadcast of the Morath performance. ("All right. But do I have to listen to it?") Remembering her promise, Sue dutifully turned on the live broadcast in time to hear Max Morath's booming baritone:

"This afternoon it's bustles and buggy whips, beer by the bucket, brass rails, troller transfers and Gibson girls ... (conspiratorial whisper) reading the Katzenjammer Kids by the wonderful electric light. (back up to booming baritone) And everybody was doin' it! Doin' what? Rocking to the rhythms of the world's first popular music. Like every form of popular music since then, it started with the kids and was frowned upon by the older generation."

Frowned upon by the older generation? My daughter, to her surprise, found herself fascinated as Max told how two teen-agers, Gene Jefferson and Bobby Roberts, used to smuggle home copies of ragtime sheet music around 1901 inside copies of Boy's Life Magazine, ignoring their parents' complaints that ragtime "reeked of excessive syncopation". Gene's father implored him to take up a trade -- "or at least go to law school!".

When I got home (following the concert and the highly successful mini-bash described elsewhere), I discovered that Sue had listened to the entire show and could quote highlights from start to finish ("Bill Bailey might have been a brakeman, but that didn't slow him down with women").

There's a message there. Max Morath's show ,"Living a Ragtime Life" has such a broad appeal that it speaks to every generation, including those who think they don't like ragtime -- and, in my daughter's case, even those who cannot see what he's doing on stage.

I cannot recall the last time that I thought only 10 minutes had gone by before intermission arrived. I also can't recall the last time I cherished every word I was hearing. Max Morath's ability to hold an audience is nothing short of mind-boggling. After announcing his next piece, he rivals Victor Borge in the amount of time he takes to get over to the piano -- dropping one-liners so spontaneously that you're convinced he thought them up that very moment.

It was the first time I had ever seen Morath in person, and I now know why others fortunate enough to have seen him in Toronto in the late 50's and early 60's -- or later in New York -- are so unanimously enthusiastic about his performances.

Continued on next page

AT THE MINI-BASH:
Max polished off a dill pickle and corned beef sandwich while posing with Ragtime Society friends, Bill McCrostie and Zella Connell McCrostie. Seconds later, he and his manager were airport-bound.

Before the one-man show had ended, I realized that the one-man concept is a hoax. There are actually half-a-dozen Max Moraths up there on the stage. There is Max Morath, the historian; Max, the gifted ragtime pianist; Max, the writer (note the beautiful alliteration in the lines I quoted); Max, the former radio announcer quoting his own lines; Max, the former stage performer directing the others; and, finally, Max Morath himself who is getting a great charge out of the whole thing. Take away any one of those Max Moraths, and I'm convinced that it wouldn't come off as well. In a word, only a Max Morath could pull off what he has been doing so splendidly for more than two decades.

That's why I recommended to John Arpin, Bill McCrostie and our other Ragtime Society directors that this issue of The Ragtimer focus on the Morath phenomenon. (It was also in response to some of our readers who have written to say they would like to know more about Max, who was born 58 years ago in Colorado, learned to play piano at an early age, and had careers in radio and on the stage before developing his highly successful series of ragtime shows)

I am including in this issue the transcript of the CBC intermission interview that my daughter taped. (Any errors in transcribing it are my fault). You'll also find in this issue a list of which Max Morath records are available, and a teaser introduction to his recently published "One for the Road" -- a tune I intend to play as a special solo later this summer at the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival.

Those who met Max later at Korenowsky's became instant fans, if they weren't already. After a two-hour show that would have exhausted the normal human being, Max listened to a succession of local ragtimers and was generous to a fault in his praise of each one. He and his stage manager lingered at the mini-bash until the last possible second before diving into a cab in order to catch a plane home to New York City. With his manager anxiously glancing at his watch, Max somehow found time to finish a corned beef sandwich, sign a couple of autographs and pose for two more pictures in the last 90 seconds.

It will be a long time before his Toronto area ragtime friends forget the magnificent concert of April 8, 1984. I hope that this special issue will keep some of the highlights fresh in the memory.

Rosemary Renaud was one of the many Ragtime Society members who played in Max's honour at the mini-bash. Rosemary (yes, she's married to Elmer who brings back SOMETHING DOING in this issue) played "Alabama Rag" and "Red Rose Rag".

MAX MORATH RECORDS AND MUSIC FOLIOS

VANGUARD LP's CURRENTLY IN CATALOG (April 1984)

39/40	The Best of Scott Joplin and other Rag Classics (also on cassette) (Double LP)
83/84	Max Morath Plays Ragtime (Double LP) (first issued as "The World of Scott Joplin, Vols. I & II) (cassette)
SRV 310	The World of Scott Joplin (Vol I, still issued singly
79391	Living a Ragtime Life
79440	Ragtime Stompers

RCA RED SEAL, with Bolcom & Morris

AGL1-3703	These Charming People (cassette avail.)
ARL1-4676	More Rodgers & Hart.

FOLIOS: (in print currently)

Max Morath's Guide to Ragtime: TRO Hollis Music, NYC, 1964
Currently Third edition

Scott Joplin: The Missouri Rags; G.Schirmer NY 1975

The Mississippi Valley Rags; G. Schirmer 1975

Giants of Ragtime; Edw. B. Marks NY 1971 (Dist. Belwin-Mills)

Songs of the Early 20th Century Entertainer; Marks. Dist Belwin Mills

Single copy sheet music

"One for the Road" Marks/Mills
(also pub. in concert band arrangement)

THE MAX BASH

MINI-BASH -- April 8, 1984
in honour of Max Morath
KORENOWSKY'S -- Toronto

AT LEFT:
George Young and his magic spoons

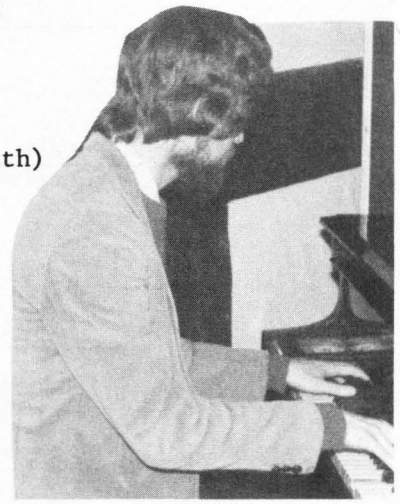
Master of Ceremonies: Mark Wittmann
Photographer: Jack Hutton

Performers:

Jack Hutton — (warm-up) Ain't Misbehavin'/ Heliotrope Bouquet/ Blackboard Rag/Handful of Keys

Austin Kitchen — Shake It And Break It
Honey Hush (Waller)

Reide Kaiser (SEEN AT THE KEYBOARD) — Passionette (Willie the Lion Smith)
Hop Scotch (George E. Cobb)
Swipesey (Joplin)



Rosemary Renaud — Alabama Rag
Red Rose Rag

Bess Fell — Jingles (James P. Johnson)
Grandpa Spells (Morton)
Mississauga Rag (Austin Kitchen)
Dizzy Fingers (Zez Confrey)

Frank Wittmann — Stumbling (Confrey)
Dynamite Rag
Making Waves (original composition)

Bob Kiviho — Vatican Rag

Jack Hutton — My Angeline
Classical Rag (Eubie Blake)

Mel Collie (banjo)
May Knudson (piano) — Sergeant-Major
Alabama Jubilee (with George Young on spoons)
Some of These Days (with George Young on spoons)

Jack Hutton
with George Young (spoons) — There's Rosemary -- by George! (composition by Jack Hutton, dedicated to Rosemary Renaud and George Young)

John Floyd	You Took Advantage of Me You're Driving Me Crazy Georgia Camp Meeting

-- short intermission and raffle:
Joan Packer won Max Morath LP

Bess Fell	Song of the Fir Tree Medley
Wayne Adams	Tango Mexico Southern Medley (pre-ragtime era)
Charlie Dunn	Whispering Sweet Georgia Brown Five Foot Two
Les Newell (guitar) Harvey Segal (vocal) Jack Hutton (piano)	I Love Toronto (original composition and arrangement by Les Newell)
Joan Packer (AT THE RIGHT)	The St. Louis Rag Kyrene
Eric Rodwell	Search Light Rag Ain't Misbehavin' Shreveport Stomp
Bess Fell	Sing-a-long
Dorothy Rose (vocal) Jack Hutton (piano)	Embraceable You Bill Bailey
Roger Broadbent	Margie When You're Smiling
Bill Beecroft (clarinet) John Floyd (piano) Mel Collie (banjo)	You're Nobody's Sweetheart Now I Can't Give You Anything But Love Danny Boy
Bill Beecroft (clarinet) Jack Hutton (piano)	Body and Soul Honeysuckle Rose

LEFT: Dorothy Rose and Betty Miquelon (with hat) share the microphone

RIGHT: "I hear you sight-read Billy Mayerl!" Max told Bess Fell

RAGTIME RUMBLES

BY BILL McCROSTIE
Vice-President
and Managing Director

April was a big month in Toronto for the Ragtime fraternity -- MAX MORATH at Roy Thomson Hall -- the mini-bash after the concert that Max was kind enough to attend -- JOHN ARPIN's very successful afternoon and evening concert in Mississauga -- JUDY CARMICHAEL at Les Copains for a week with her great stride and ragtime piano.

Also enjoyed during May-June at Copains: DICK WELLSTOOD, ART HODES and JAY MCSHANN.

Our international membership has grown as Steve Hull is now in Crete . ROSS PETOT and his wife, KIM, are in Germany. Should we start a European branch?

We'll be talking in a future issue about the Toronto International Jazz Festival (June 27-July 2) which, we're pleased to say, included groups like the ROYAL SOCIETY JAZZ ORCHESTRA from San Francisco, Calif., the HOT ANTIC jazz group from France, and the always welcome NEW BLACK EAGLE JAZZ BAND with Eli Newberger. Among the local groups playing were the RAINBOW GARDENS JAZZ ORCHESTRA, the TORONTO JAZZ and the EXCELSIOR JAZZ BAND.

Both jazz and ragtime enthusiasts will be sorry, very selfishly, to hear that JIM BUCKMAN left Toronto around the end of May to play at Disney World. Jim is not only a great musician but one of the finest gentlemen on the Toronto music scene. He will be missed.

As the Rainbow Gardens Jazz Orchestra played for the closing of the old Toronto Press Club in January, it was only right that they played for the opening of the Toronto media's new quarters during National Newspaper Week in May. A great night.

Speaking of the Rainbow Gardens Jazz Orchestra (which many will recall from the '83 Bash dinner), the group completed its first record just in time for the Toronto festival -- and also just in time to present one of the first copies to Kathryn Crosby, in Toronto to promote her book, My Life With Bing. After hearing that the RGO performed many of Bing's early numbers, Mrs. Crosby's manager arranged a hastily arranged special concert. Bing's widow was especially impressed by singer Gordon Vogt who sings (and whistles) "Lazy Day" on the record. (The record will be available through the Society. More details later)

On June 20, a private park was opened officially in Toronto in honour of a ragtime era tune many don't realize was written in Toronto -- The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise. The speaker at the event was Ragtimer editor Jack Hutton who has written a book (so far unpublished) about the tune. Toronto classical pianist Ernest Seitz completed the music in 1916, aided by a boyhood friend, Gene Lockhart (a familiar name later on Broadway and on the Hollywood screen) who supplied the lyrics and title. June Lockhart, who is helping Jack with the book, sent family greetings.

Your letters and your comments on your membership cards give all your directors a real shot in the arm. Keep writing.

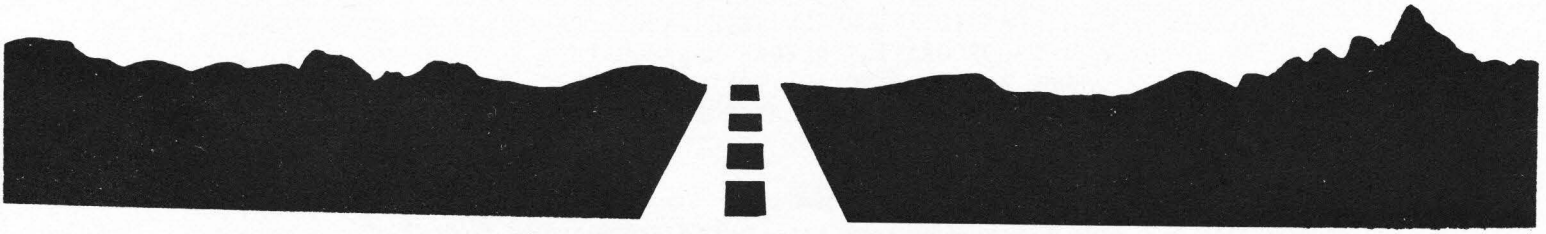
MS 1901

ONE FOR THE ROAD

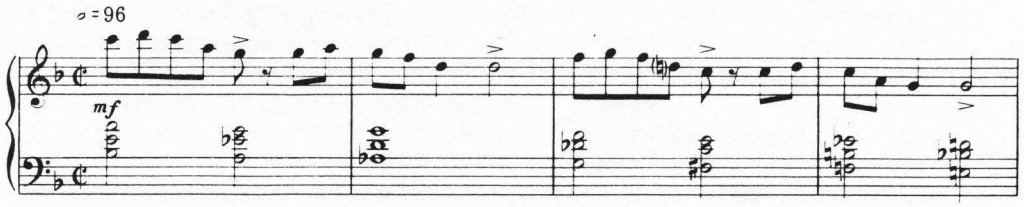
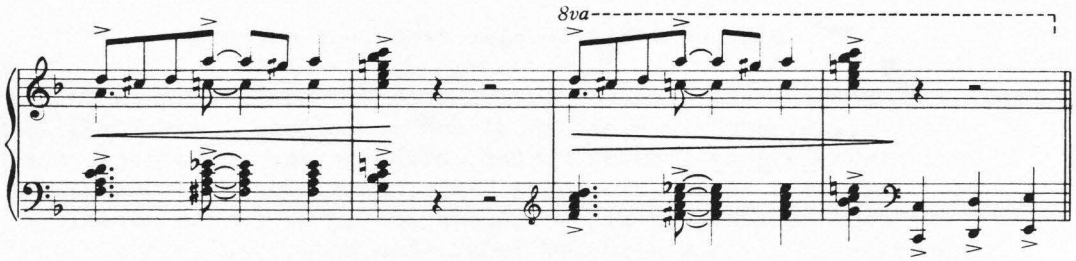
PIANO SOLO

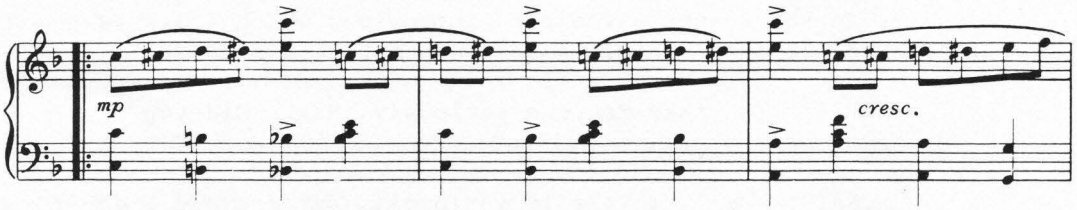
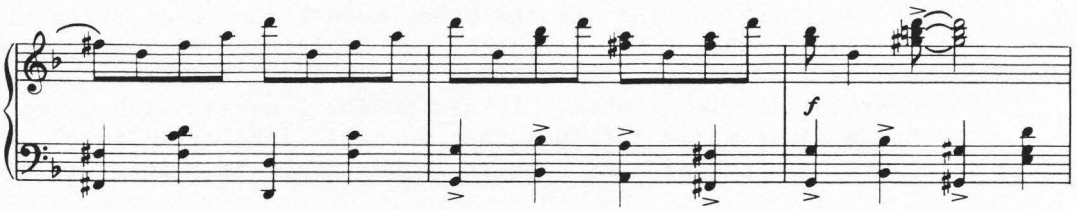
by

MAX MORATH



If you've heard Max Morath's feisty pit band recently, you probably heard them play this delightful rag -- "One for the Road". Good news for ragtimers is the fact that the Max Morath composition is available both in sheet music and in a concert band arrangement.

It opens with a ragtime piano introduction that goes like this.

Sounds easy, doesn't it?

At last -- something you can sight read.

Well, hang onto your hat for this middle theme. Max uses a broken left hand rhythm that reminds one vaguely of James P. Johnson's "Over the Bars". It's great fun!

Tell your music dealer it's published by MARKS MUSIC CORPORATION.

-- Jack Hutton

MAX TALKS ABOUT RAGTIME

IN THIS LIVELY, CANDID INTERVIEW WITH WARREN DAVIS, TAPED FOR THE CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION BEFORE MAX MORATH'S ROY THOMSON HALL SHOW, MAX TALKS ABOUT A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS, RANGING FROM THE "WORTHLESS" PIANO ROLLS SUPPOSEDLY PLAYED BY SCOTT JOPLIN TO THE BIRTH OF THE RAGTIME SOCIETY.

WARREN DAVIS: How did you become interested in ragtime music?

MAX MORATH: Well, I was lucky. I had a mother who was a pretty darn good pianist, both intuitively and as a schooled pianist. She played the popular repertory, very much against the wishes of her parents. She was born in southern Iowa and grew up around the turn of the century. She had an older brother who was also a good pianist, so a lot of the early rags from the turn of the century -- mostly published in Missouri -- were still in our piano bench a generation later when I was a kid growing up in Colorado. While I really didn't know what they were, I found that those rags were irresistible. You know, they are -- they're irresistible pianistic music. So I struggled and learned three or four of them as a kid, and I heard my mother play them.

DAVIS: Did you learn to play from your mother?

MORATH: Well, not really. I took kid piano lessons and later some formal study, both in high school and in college. But I really didn't take piano lessons from my mother, although she was a great influence on me. She was a remarkable woman. She was a newspaper woman by profession but she was also a good pianist who taught herself to improvise when she was in her 30's. You know, you're not supposed to be able to do that. Either you learn to read or you learn to improvise, but we hit the Depression and my mother wanted to keep on playing the popular songs she heard on the radio. She couldn't afford the sheet music, so she taught herself to improvise, which I always thought was a remarkable thing. I got that from her too, I suppose.

DAVIS: You take ragtime seriously, Max. Did you always feel that way about it?

MORATH: Well, I take it seriously, Warren, and I don't. I take it seriously in the sense that it has been an undervalued, underrated form of pop culture and it's a challenging, satisfying form of piano music. But I hasten to add that on the other hand I do not enjoy ragtime to the exclusion of other forms of music, nor do I think we all have to have it or we can't go on in life. I mean, I don't think that it has that kind of overwhelming importance. It has to do, I guess, with my general attitude about all the things that we call "popular culture"; that is, they are in a certain way ephemeral and should be. In other words, as

you heard me say in my first act, I don't think we can bring back those things from the past. Popular music, popular arts fit their own time, and should. As the years go by, and this has certainly happened with ragtime, the wheat gets separated from the chaff. There has never been a time in popular music that produced more junk than the ragtime years. You go through stacks of sheet music ...

DAVIS (interrupting): Are you telling me there was more junk then than now?

MORATH: I don't know. It would be a close second! (both laugh) And so that process of threshing has gone on as the Joplin rags and those of lesser composers have come back to the surface. They are back in print. Young people are playing them. That's as it should be. I think that's wonderful. But I wouldn't want to see ragtime become contemporary.

DAVIS: What would it have been like to be an itinerant entertainer in the ragtime era?

MORATH: Well, looking through rose-coloured glasses today, it looks like fun and exciting. But I also think it might have been very difficult because in the first place -- while it isn't true of all the performers -- the chances are that you would have been a young black male, operating in an extremely racist environment, and therefore would have had all those awful difficulties that you never think about when you're white. You couldn't find a place to hang your hat at night, go to the bathroom or get a meal while you were on tour, and that has only begun to be alleviated in our times, as you know.

DAVIS: Would there have been concert performances ...

MORATH: Concert performances by blacks? Almost never. Not in the sense that we regard the term today. There really wasn't that super-inflated cultural attitude towards the popular arts at all. I have found, by the way, in researching the literature as well as in talking to what few old-timers I was able to talk to that this was not only a racist situation but a condescending attitude towards the arts establishment of the time. We now take it for granted that we can use the term "artist, dealing with somebody who's in the popular world -- I mean, those terms are all pretty slippery. When you go back through the old music journals and even the biographical journals and so forth, you're astonished at not <u>what</u> they said but the fact that they didn't say <u>anything</u> (about early ragtime artists)...

DAVIS: They were beneath notice...

MORATH: Exactly. There was nobody wandering around St. Louis, Missouri, at World's Fair time with a cassette deck, interviewing Louis Chauvin and Scott Joplin. If there had been, if they'd had cassette decks, or interviews on the CBC, you would not have found Scott Joplin. I wouldn't either, by the way. None of us would have. It was just a different world.

DAVIS: Well, how did their reputations grow?

MORATH: Mainly through the sales of sheet music and, to a much less extent, recordings. Sheet music was the real key to ragtime. Remember this. For technical reasons, the acoustic recording of the imperfect scale of the piano made the piano very difficult to record. If you go back to that first 25 years of recording -- which, after all, was a booming business, a multi-million dollar business -- the piano is the least recorded instrument. It's even difficult to find Josef Hofmann and Rachminoff. I mean, they're there but they don't sound very good.

DAVIS: What about piano rolls?

MORATH: Piano rolls filled that void for that very reason. There again, though, with a few exceptions, the people we're talking about, the ragtimers, the blacks, the ringleaders, the revolutionaries if you will, were not in those studios. The piano rolls fell roughly into two categories: one, the total pop stuff which was usually done away from the keyboard. It was done mechanically. The other was the just wonderful so-called "reproducing pianos" which were invented by the Germans and picked up in America which were actually reproductions of performances, you know, including all the dynamics, the pedalling. Ninety-nine percent of the reproductions or, if you will, transcriptions were made by classical pianists, and there we do have access to Josef Hofmann and Harold Bower and those great virtuosi of the turn of the century. But of the popular artists who come to mind from the 20's, Gershwin did a few. A few of the hot theatrical pianists in New York did a few, but there are no Scott Joplin hand-played rolls, for instance. They are labelled that, by the way. There are seven Joplin rolls that are called hand-played. Well, they're not. They're doctored. They're worthless. Yet, people listen to them as if they can reverently learn how Scott Joplin played the piano, and it's a bummer. It's not accurate.

DAVIS: Is it true that many of the ragtime pianists played in houses of ill repute?

MORATH: Sure. But so did a lot of people. I mean, it was a place to work. I find that that's one of the most difficult things that over the years as the image of ragtime has changed it's still a kind of an elbow-in-the-ribs "Let's go down to the whorehouse where they're playing this kind of music and have a drink". Musicians work where they can work and, in many cases, playing a high class sporting class was not a bad gig. I wouldn't have minded it. It was just like working in a saloon. There are good saloons and bad saloons. You know, the legends are that those fellows made in side money $50 to $75 a night, and that's about 1900.

DAVIS: That's pretty good money.

MORATH: It ain't bad and it was what they call "off the books".

DAVIS: But there were itinerant musicians at that time, going from place to place, booked into different places?

MORATH: Sure -- but I have to plead some ignorance. I can't really tell you what went on in the day-to-day world of the black musician of that time. Remember that. I can tell you a lot about what went on in vaudeville on the visible levels. I can tell you about what went on in the recording studios and in the music publishing business, which is where ragtime manifested itself and found its way into the white middle class and became, by the way, our first popular music. It was the first popular music the world had ever seen, meaning, of course, that it simply came out of a huge industry that had nothing to do but make money by printing sheet music. Thank god they did. I mean, if we hadn't had those manuscripts in print, we'd have nothing.

DAVIS: Plus the fact that the piano was the household instrument.

MORATH: Yes indeed. And the evolution -- one doesn't call it the "invention" -- the evolution of the upright piano in the '80's transformed the availability of that instrument to the middle class. You know, before the upright piano -- the good old-fashioned six-foot-high upright -- you either had a lot of money and bought a grand or you had one of these little dumb spinets that are glamorized in old western movies but weren't worth a damn as a musical instrument. There was no in between.

DAVIS: So there were those two developments -- the growth of the sheet music business and the development of the upright piano ...

MORATH: Well, you see, I'm a great believer in economic pressures, in mercantilism, as they have to do with the arts. I think that's one of the most fascinating things about the 20th Century, and that is that right at the beginning of the 20th Century by sheer luck several inventions popped through that have changed our lives. We fail to take that into consideration. We think that movies have always been here. We think that recordings have always been here. We think that the ability to print a piece of music in New York on Monday and have it on the store shelves in San Francisco on Friday has always been around. It ain't true. That whole thing had to do with the development in Canada and the U.S. of a completely economic merchandising scheme that had little interest in what it was selling. They didn't care about ragtime. They didn't care about whatever it was that was on those records. You were in the record business, so you ordered some product. That's what they call it now, you know. They didn't then.

DAVIS: Max, when and why did ragtime music die?

MORATH: Well, the "when" is easier to answer than "why". You can say that ragtime pretty much began to become quaint and lose its thrust about (pause) 1915-16-17. There was a slippage in the terminology. You know, all those terms are pretty useless -- RAGTIME, JAZZ, SWING, FOLK, ROCK. They're meaningless. They're terms that people in our business use to label performers, and pigeonhole things in Variety. But I've always thought that somewhere around 1915 you might have heard an orchestra in St. Louis or New Orleans playing a certain thing, and you'd go up to the stand and say "What do you call that music?", and they'd say "Ragtime." Two years later you could hear them playing exactly the same thing and if you asked them the same question they'd say "We call it "jass". I mean, the terms started to take over and then "jazz", as it became known, a different music, an improvisational music and a band music, took over. And it had a certain reign as traditional jazz, as we

call it today. All those things, I think, are evolutionary and I think it's one of the problems of not only pop culture but history generally that we look back and we insist on drawing nice neat lines. We insist on there being decades, and there aren't, you know! History doesn't work that way. Everything kind of slips and slides and evolves, and then some giant comes along like Jelly Roll Morton or Scott Joplin or Art Tatum or George Gershwin and things shift. So -- that's the "when". The word "jazz" appeared, and it was the hip thing for a young generation and "ragtime" was the older generation becoming quaint around World War I.

The "why", I guess, has to do with that whole idea of the ephemeral nature of popular arts and culture and the fact that each generation -- at least in the 20th Century -- has seemed to want and need a form of dance and sound of its own and thumb its nose at its parents with it, and we certainly see that as a continuing thing for better or for worse. And believe me, the furore developed by ragtime between the generations was every bit as intense, if not more so, than anything that has happened since, including the rock phenomenon of the 60's. So, the "why", I think, is answerable out of our nature. I mean, we want these things. It's fashion. Popular music is fashion -- like hairstyles.

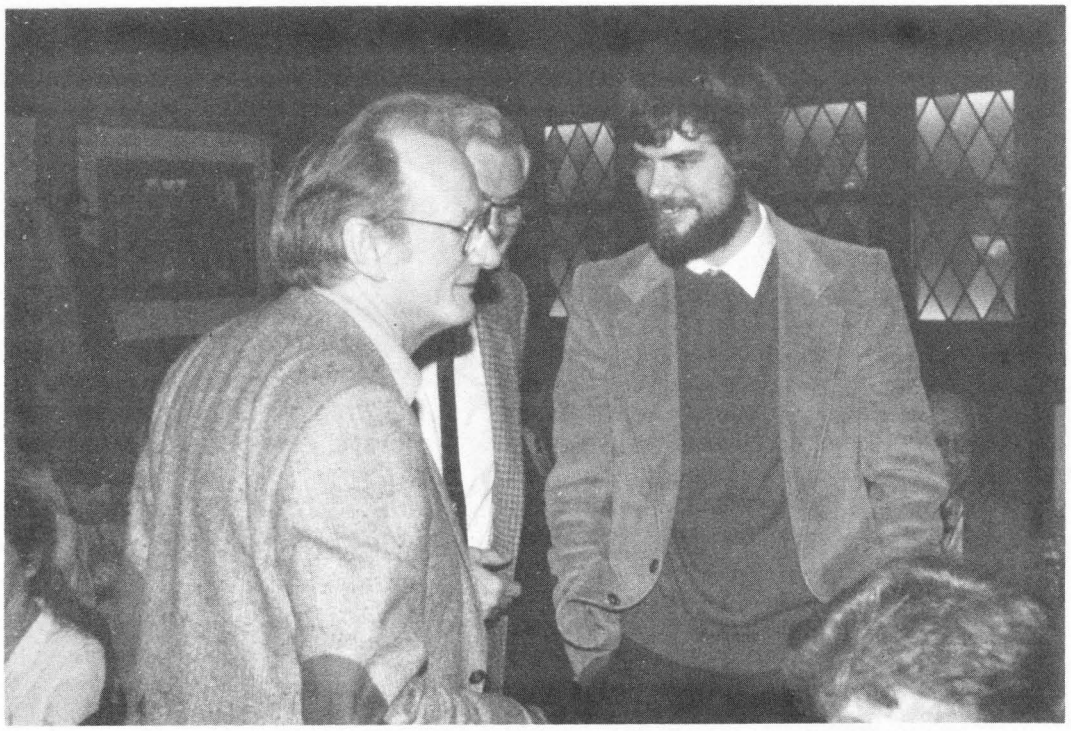
DAVIS: Let's talk a little bit about Canada. I understand that you were visiting some old pals here last night.

MORATH: Yes, I wish I had time to see more of my friends here. You know, I used to work in Toronto a lot in the 1960's at a very successful club up on St. Clair called Club 76 which, for four or five years in the late 1950's and early 1960's, was an oasis of pretty good ragtime shows. It was a situation where about six of us -- including Johnny Maddox, Bob Darch and Bob Howe -- came in there for about eight to 10 weeks each. As a result of that, or in tandem with it, there was formed here in Toronto in 1962 the Ragtime Society which, at that time, was the only ragtime society in North America organized solely for the promulgation and the promotion of classic ragtime. To this day, it is one of only two. Now here's a paradox for you. There is now a club which started out in Los Angeles in the mid-1960's called the Maple Leaf Club. The paradox, of course, is obvious. The Maple Leaf Club is named for Scott Joplin's great rag, probably the most successful and most imitated rag of all time. So when they decided to form an organization in L.A., they quite properly called it the Maple Leaf Club which, of course, I've always thought they should have called the one in Toronto!

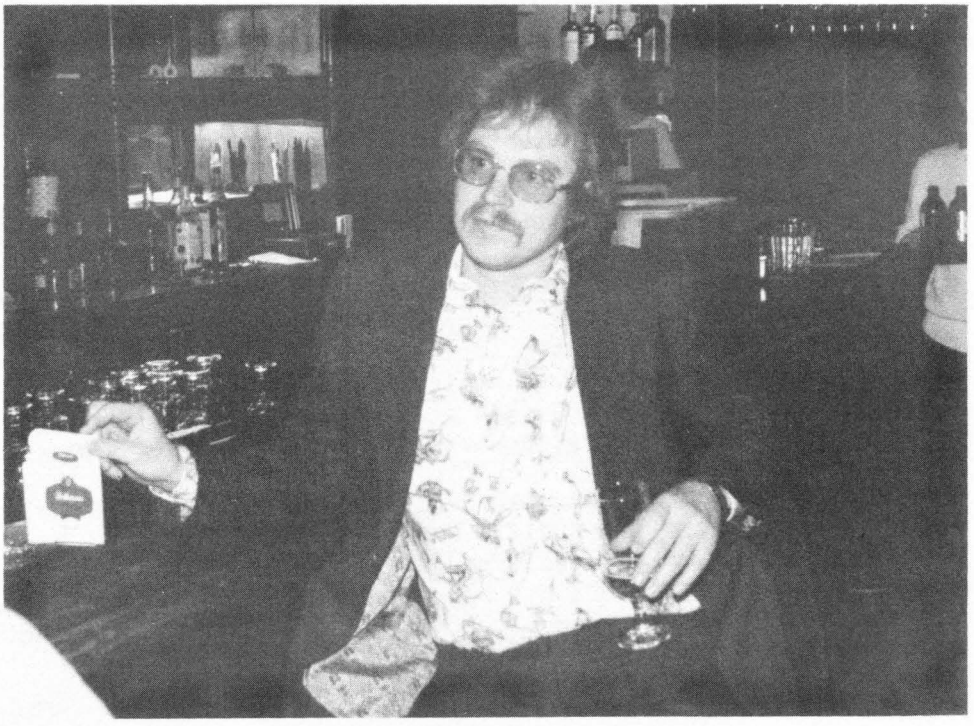
The Ragtime Society in Toronto has performed a wonderful function for a lot of those years before ragtime became somewhat hip again because the Ragtime Society produced records, or distributed already produced records which were impossible to find; it printed and reprinted sheet music at minimal costs at a time when you just couldn't find those things in original copies; it printed a bi-monthly newsletter and still does, which has to do with not only concerts and current things but historical articles. It's a wonderful service which has been going on for almost 25 years.

DAVIS: Max, a word about yourself. When you step on stage, what do you hope to achieve?

MORATH: I don't expect an audience that comes into a theatre to be pre-disposed or pre-educated to ragtime. My shows, in the tours that I do, are to general audiences. They come in, look at the program and say "Now, just what does this guy do? What do you suppose LIVING A RAGTIME LIFE means?" That's fine with me. My show is not aimed at specialists. I just hope an audience leaves feeling a little happier than they were when they walked in.

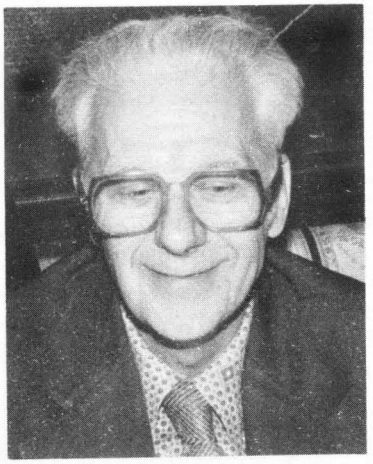


Max Morath found time to talk to as many ragtimers as possible at the Ragtime Society mini-bash following his April 8th concert. Here he is with Reide Kaiser, whose playing he admired.



Bob Kiviaho, who played "Vatican Rag" came down from Sudbury to hear and meet Max Morath -- one of many who came from outside the Toronto area for the special occasion.

SOMETHING DOING



By Elmer Renaud

who tells us what's happening in Ragtime from Detroit to Denmark, plus travel notes from our newest correspondent in Kenya -- Robert R. (Ragtime) Darch. If you'd like your name added, see the Editor's note at the end of Something Doing.

JOHN ARPIN Playing at Club 22, the piano bar at Toronto's Windsor Arms Hotel, 5:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., Monday through Friday

CONCERTS -- July 27 (noon-hour concert), Quinte Summer Festival; Sept. 30 (with Catherine Wilson), St. Dunstan's, 3152 Danforth Ave., Toronto, 8 p.m.; Oct. 5, Dundalk, Ont., 8 p.m.; Oct. 19, Cobourg, Ont., 8 p.m.; Nov. 4, Elliot Lake, Ont., 8 p.m.; Nov. 28, Sarnia Collegiate Institute of Technology, Sarnia, Ont., 8 p.m. (JOHN ARPIN played two shows April 8 at the Glenforest Theatre, Mississauga, Ont.; an April 14th concert at the National Home Show; and a May 30 concert at the Scarborough Centennial Arena)

MEL COLLIE A frequent banjo performer at recent Bashes, Mel performs frequently around Toronto, usually at the Jack Russell Pub, 27 Wellesley St. East, Toronto, with his own group, The Entertainers (piano, banjo, drums). The group emphasizes sing-a-long favorites "in an easy-going unpretentious pub atmosphere with lots of audience participation and guest artists popping in."

ROBERT R. (RAGTIME) DARCH -- This peripatetic ragtime ambassador's schedule is loaded with exotic names, consonants and "umlats"which the Editor has stored in his piano bench. The playing times, of course, reflect Col. Darch's military background:

Prinz Josef Hotel Bar, Bern, Switzerland, June 22; St. Stefans Restaurant, Prague, Czechoslovakia, July 1-16, 18:00-22:00 daily; Jacobs Bar B.Q., Vestergade 3, 8000 Arhus (DK), July 17 through July 28, 21:30 - 02:00; Hotel Anglais, Humlegardsgaten 23, Stockholm, Sweden, July 30-Sept. 9, 20:00-01:00 daily; Hotel Kramer, Malmo, Sweden, Sept. 10-20, 20:00-01:00; Restaurant Downtown Key Club, Universitetsgaten 26 (30 hours per week, flexible), Oslo, Norway, Sept. 24- Oct. 20; Royal Alexandria Hotel, Heleopolis, Egypt, Oct. 24-Nov. 12; Peponi Hotel, Lamu Island, Kenya, East Africa, Nov. 14-Dec. 5; Hlyhluwe Holiday Inn, Johannesburg, South Africa, Dec. 7 through Jan. 6, 1985, 5 days per week, 20:00-24:00 (Bob played May 31 in Kalunburg, Denmark; June 1-June 6 in Klampengorg, Denmark; June 7-June 21 in Skagen, Denmark (Whew!)

KERRY GOWER is the featured pianist/vocalist with the PAINT CREEK JAZZ SOCIETY at Nealee's on the Hill, Tiemkin Road, Rochester, Michigan, Friday and Saturday 9:00-1 a.m. winter hours (9:30 - 1:30 a.m., summer hours). The Saturday personnel includes Chuck Moss, trombone, Dave Tatroe, clarinet, Bill Bolle, bass, Rick Bryant, drums, and Kerry on piano.

WALT GOWER Plays clarinet at the Woodbridge Tavern, St. Aubin and Woodbridge, Detroit, Michigan with St. Aubin Street Ramblers every Saturday and alternate Fridays (9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m.). Bob Milne plays piano Saturday nights; Linda plays the alternate Fridays (as noted below in SOMETHING DOING)

DAN GRINSTEAD Playing steam calliope, Echo Bay Resort, Gilford Island, British Columbia, during July, 1984. (Dan, a welcome addition at the '83 Bash, played piano accompaniment for Silent Films, Seattle 1984 Film Festival, Egyptian Theatre, Seattle, during May and June)

JEAN AND PAUL HULING (Sister Jean, the Ragtime Queen and Laundry Fat) Playing every Saturday, 9 p.m.- 1 a.m., Cleaveland Crate and Trucking Co. Restaurant, Cleveland, Ohio, with Ralph Cruegel's New Eagle Jazz Band.

Playing after sunset every Wednesday during July and August at Sea World Park, Aurora, Ohio, with the New Eagle Jazz Band. (Jean and Paul also played April 28 at the Maple Festival, Chardon, Ohio, a fundraiser drive in Rome, N.Y., May 6, and the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Reunion in Huntington, W. Va., May 11-13.

JOHNNY MADDOX Playing at Il Porto Restaurant nightly except Sundays July 2-Sept. 22 and Oct. 22-Dec. 15. (EDITOR: Sorry, we don't have the address or phone number of the Il Porto Restaurant)

MIKE MONTGOMERY Playing at the Dakota Inn Rathskeller, 17324 John R St., Detroit, Mi (near Woodward and McNichols) on Friday nights between 8 p.m. and 1:30 a.m. Note: the restaurant is closed during July, but Mike is there most Friday nights the remainder of the year. Call 313-867-9722 to make sure if you're planning a visit. Says Mike: "I don't play many rags -- mostly pop songs and show tunes. People from the audience sing solos; Gary Thompson occasionally comes in and sings rag songs."

BOB MILNE Ramada Inn, Telegraph Road, Southfield, Michigan, solo piano, Monday through Thursday 5-8 p.m. (Also Dixieland Sunday brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.)

Woodbridge Tavern, Woodbridge Street, Detroit, Michigan, Dixieland band, 8 p.m.-1:30 a.m. every Saturday night Linda Milne plays with the Dixieland band alternate Fridays, 9:30 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.(259-0578)

BOB AND LINDA MILNE Real Seafood Co., Portside Mall, Summit Street, Toledo, Ohio, 12:00-2; 5 p.m.-9 p.m., Sunday

NEW BLACK EAGLE JAZZ BAND (Ralph Cruegel, leader. Pianist is Bob Pilsbury; Eli Newberger is tuba player and occasional pianist) Plays every Thursday, 7:30 -11 p.m. at Sticky Wicket Pub, Hopkinton, MA. Also plays every other Wednesday at Jazzboat, Commonwealth Pier, Boston, MA., sailings at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m., beginning June 13, 1984. Toronto International Jazz Festival, June 27 to July 2, 1984.

RAINBOW GARDENS JAZZ ORCHESTRA Toronto International Jazz Festival, June 27-July 2, 1984; Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival, Davenport, Iowa, July 26-29, 1984. (The group, which finished its first record in June, is booked for a Caribbean cruise out of Tampa, Florida, in early January. For details, write to Ric Giorgi, 172 Rushton Road, Toronto M6G 3J1)

RENT PARTY REVELLERS (an all-star touring band that includes Tex Wyndham on cornet): May 25-28 - Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee, Sacramento, California; Sept. 14 - The Sticky Wicket Pub, Hopkinton, Massachusetts; Sept. 15 -- Concert for the Connecticut Traditional Jazz Society (location to be announced); Sept. 16 - Jazz brunch at the Sticky Wicket Pub, Hopkinton, Massachusetts; Sept. 17 - The University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire. (The group has already been booked tentatively for the Chicago Festival of Traditional Jazz in November, 1985. How's that for being in demand?)

SI RICHARDS Plays Wednesdays 7 p.m. to 12 p.m. and Thursdays 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. at Chung's Restaurant, 21080 Lorain Road, Fairview Park, Ohio 44126 (216-333-3070). Or you'll find Si on Friday nights at the Cleveland Yachting Club, 200 Yacht Club Drive, Rocky River, Ohio 44116 (216-333-1155) between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Si, a perennial favorite at the Bash, shows the influence of his idols: Art Tatum, Fats Waller and Teddy Wilson (who wrote admiring notes for a Si Richards LP)

BOB SEELEY Plays Tuesday to Saturday, 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., at Charley's Crab Restaurant, Highway 175 and Crooks Road, Troy, Michigan (a northern suburb of Detroit). Bob Seeley is in his 12th year at Charley's Crab Restaurant, which won't surprise Bash admirers of his ragtime, stride, boogie and blues styles. (When pressed, he can also play either classical or ballads) To confirm that Bob is playing call 313-546-4337 (home number)

CATHERINE WILSON Playing regularly at the Courtyard Cafe, Windsor Arms Hotel, Monday to Saturday, 7 p.m.-11 p.m., June 11-16; July 16-21; August 13-18; Oct. 15-20; Oct. 29-Nov. 3; Nov. 26-Dec. 1; Dec. 24-29. Catherine was to perform at the Scott Joplin Festival in Sedalia, Missouri, June 7-10 (and hopefully will describe that for the Ragtimer). As noted above, she and John Arpin have a piano duo concert Sunday, Sept. 30, at St. Dunstan's Church in Toronto (Victoria Park and Danforth)

TEX WYNDHAM appearing with his RED LION JAZZ BAND the first Friday of each month, 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., The Haberdashery, 8th and King Streets, Wilmington, Delaware.

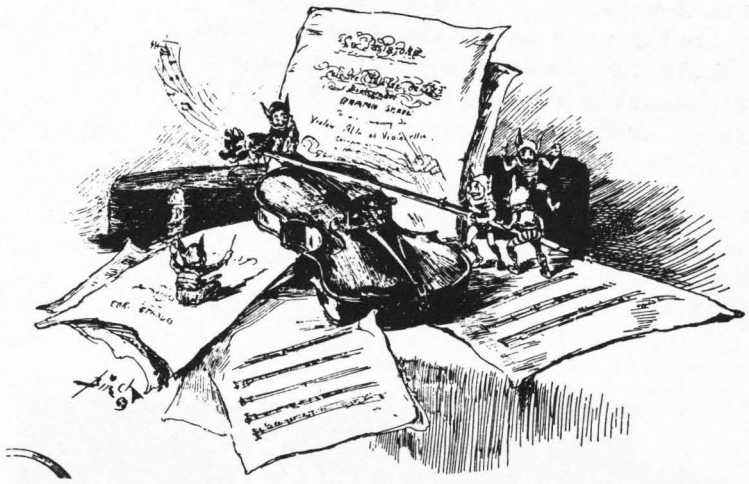
Plus: -- June 24, 2 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Concert for the Northern Virginia Ragtime Society, Vienna, Virginia

-- Concert, 8:00 p.m.-10 p.m., The Rehoboth Art League, Henlopen Acres, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

About SOMETHING DOING

When I began editing the Ragtimer, I suspended SOMETHING DOING until it could be brought up to date. If you recall, some of the listings had ragtimers playing in places they hadn't set foot in for years. The column is now reborn, thanks to Elmer Renaud who recently handed me a small pile of forms returned to him by the individuals and bands listed. In setting up the column (it took me three hours on a word processor) I felt that ragtimers were as interested in past dates as future ones (this is, after all, our chronological history), but I'm open to any suggestions about how you would improve the format. That particularly applies to the people named. From here on, it's up to the performers to prevent SOMETHING DOING from becoming totally out-of-date again. Write to Elmer Renaud, 68 Hillside Drive, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Jack Hutton, Editor



SHEET MUSIC REVIEWS

By Tex Wyndham

Asparagus Rag, Mamie's Rag, A Breeze From Glens Falls, Nevertheless No. 1 - A Ragtime Waltz, Nevertheless, No. 2 -- A Ragtime Waltz, Nevertheless No. 3 - A Ragtime Waltz, composed by Steen Christensen.

Available at $3.00 (U.S.) each, or $15.00 (U.S.) for all six, from Steen Christensen, Skovgardshuset, Asa bygade 30, 4170 Glumso, DK-Denmark.

Note: Danish banks apparently will not accept personal checks in foreign currency. If you are unwilling to mail cash overseas (I wouldn't), you'll have to ask your local bank to make up a check drawn on a band in U.S. dollars payable to "Steen Christensen".

Unlike most items reviewed in The Ragtimer, these six piano solos are not commercially produced -- that is, they have not been set in type and printed. They have been neatly handwritten, reproduced on sturdy yellow cardboard, and carefully hinged with tape. The final product, despite its homemade look, is as legible and easy-to-read as anything you'll find, and probably more durable than most.

The selections are not thickly scored and are relatively undemanding technically. One might place them on a par with the less dense Joplin rags in that respect, or perhaps with material by Botsford or Lodge.

Given that ragtimers are scarce enough in the U.S. and Canada, Christensen must be working in a real vacuum in Denmark, both with respect to availability of music and LPs to use as models, and to interchanging ideas with others. Maybe it is not surprising, then, to discover that at least in places, his three rags are strongly derivative of the more favous classic compositions. "Asparagus Rag", for example, opens with an attractive and original strain set to habanera rhythm using left-hand tenths, but tends to lose its distinctiveness thereafter. I hear licks or echoes of "Frog Legs", "Heliotrope Bouquet" and possibly "On The Pike" in its C and D themes, while its ending consists of a climbing figure that sort of hangs in mid-air. Similarly, "Nevertheless No. 1" and "Nevertheless No. 2" are fairly bland, not-very-syncopated pastiches of middle-of-the-road parlour pieces from the ragtime years.

By contrast, "Mamie's Rag" and "Nevertheless No. 3" are worthy efforts, showing imagination and a good sense of construction. "Mamie's Rag" is a solid Missouri-style 3-strain number, not hard, fun to play, that gathers steam nicely as it goes along. "Nevertheless No. 3" works well at its marked "bright" tempo. Its 3-notes-vs.- 2-beats melody in the A theme, combined with a repeated treble note above the melody, make it sound more syncopated than it is, while the Confreyesque descending motif in D makes for an unusual, very pianistic rideout. I'd say both of these would win applause in just about any ragtime gathering.

So the collection is a mixed bag -- two winners, with four being possibly more watery than we'd like. If you're interested in contemporary ragtime, I can report that the mail delivery service from Denmark is much faster than it sometimes is here in the U.S.

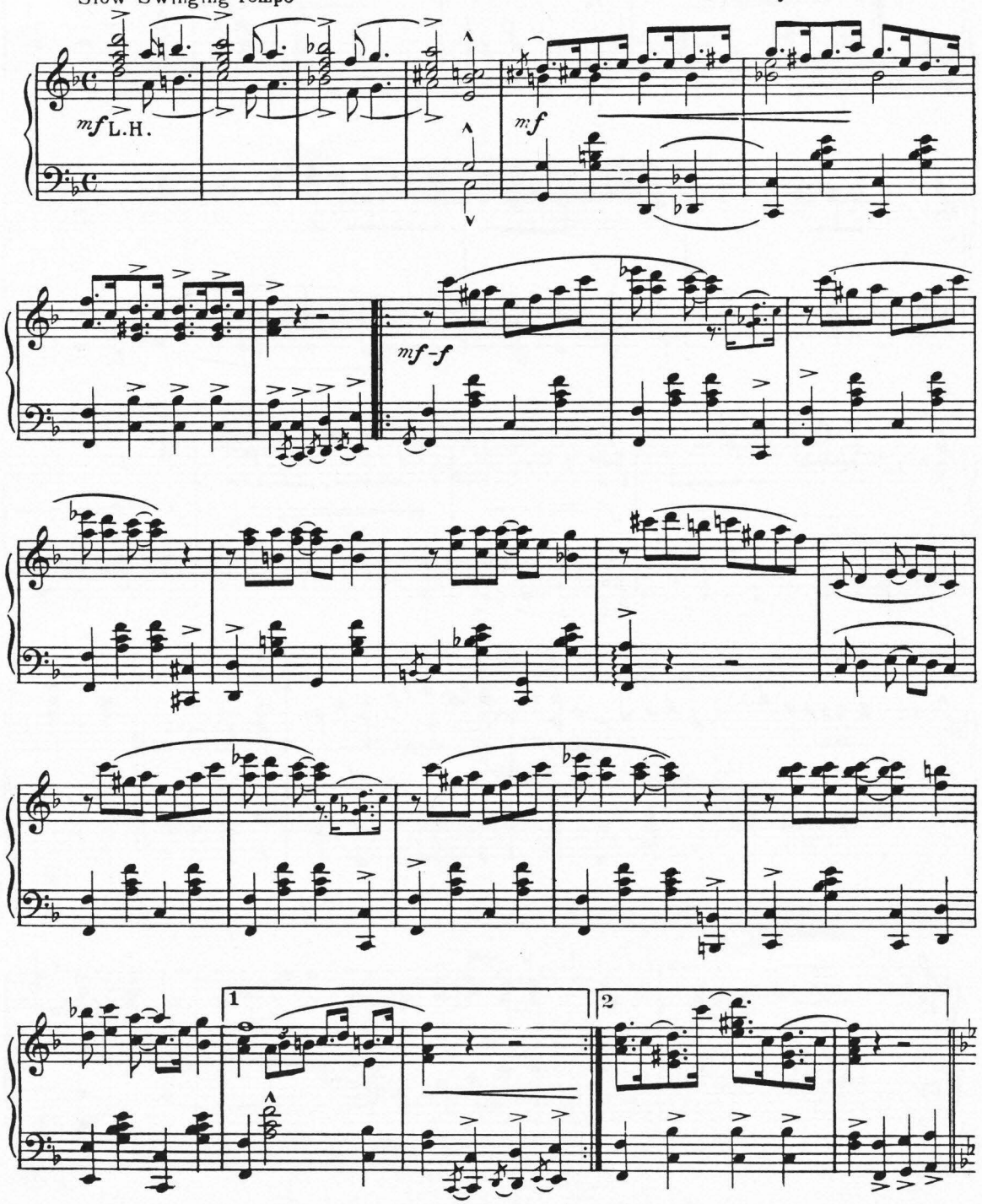
AT THE MAX BASH
ON APRIL 8, 1984

Speaking of ragtime sheet music, Frank Wittmann played his newly copyrighted ragtime tune, Making Waves, at the Max mini-bash. It's a delightful tune with Joplinesque overtones.

MISSOURI BLUES

FOX TROT

By HARRY BROWN

Slow Swinging Tempo

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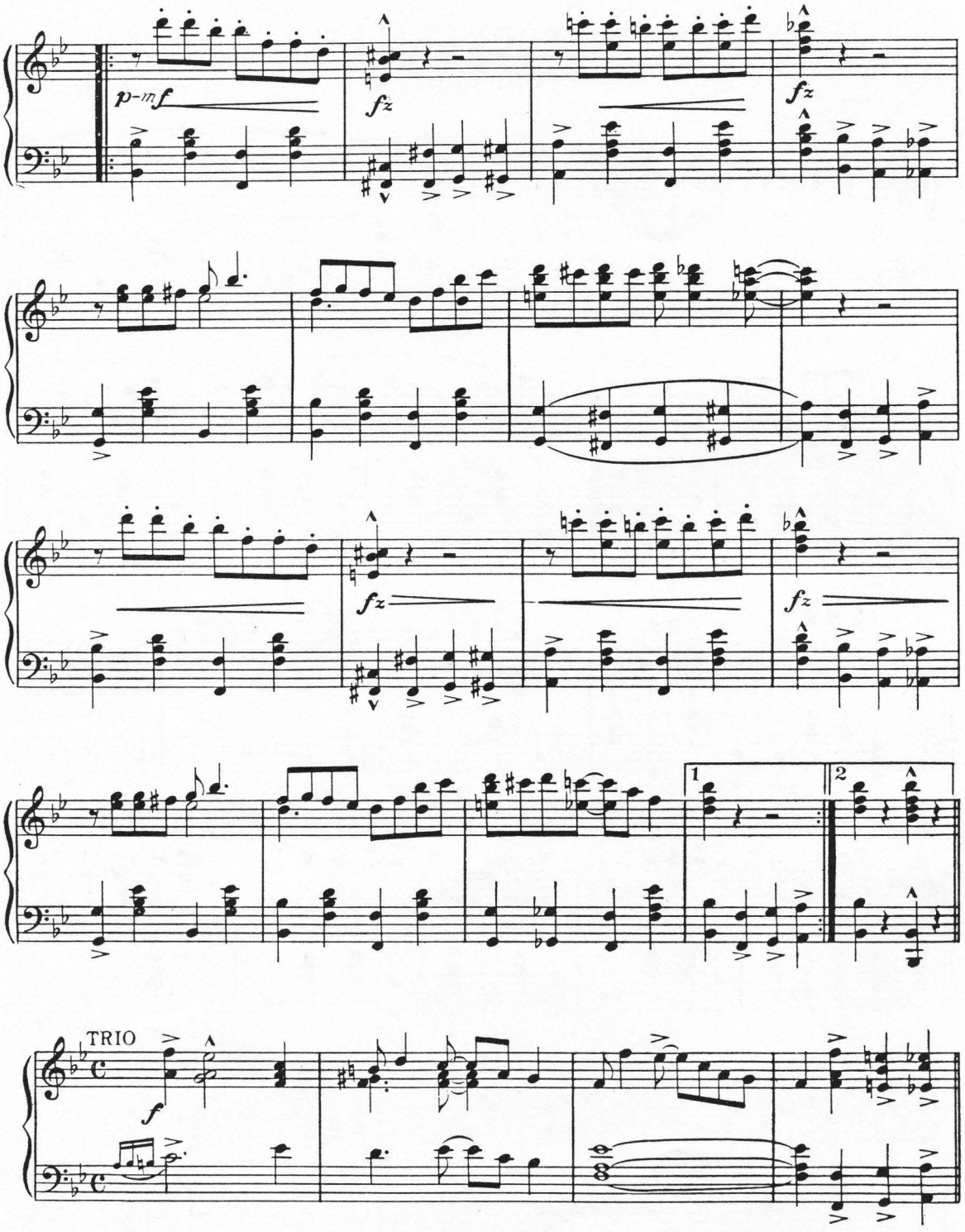
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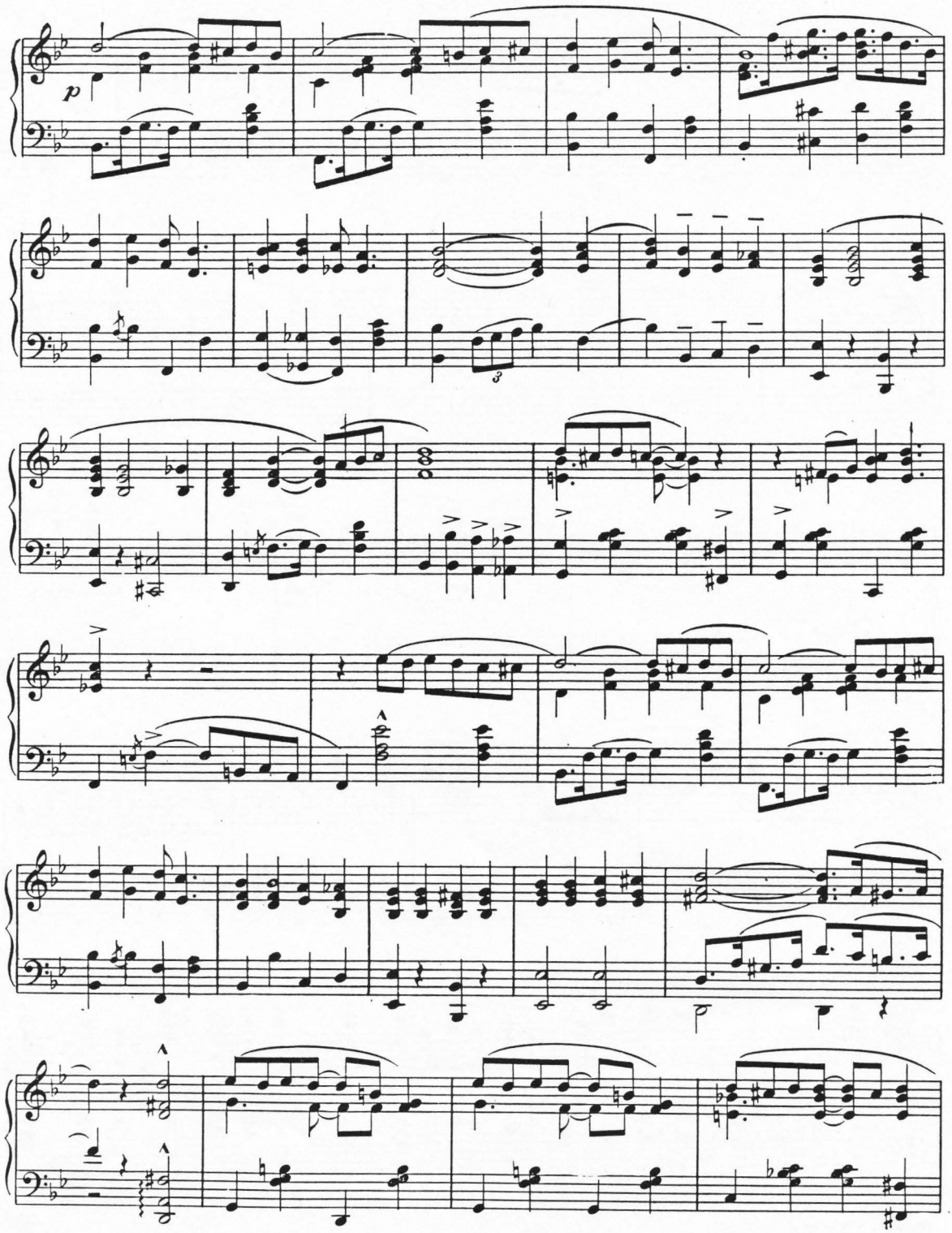
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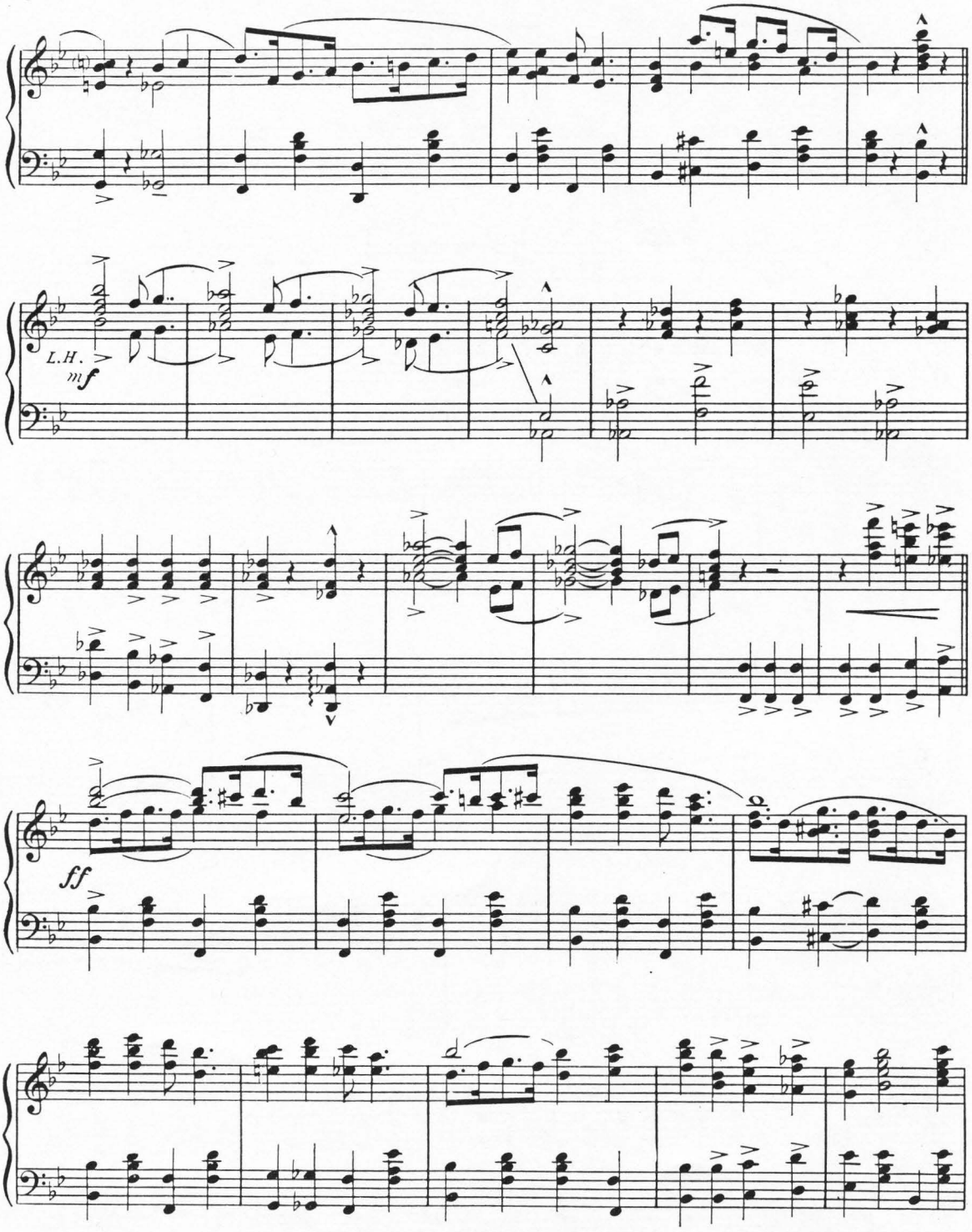
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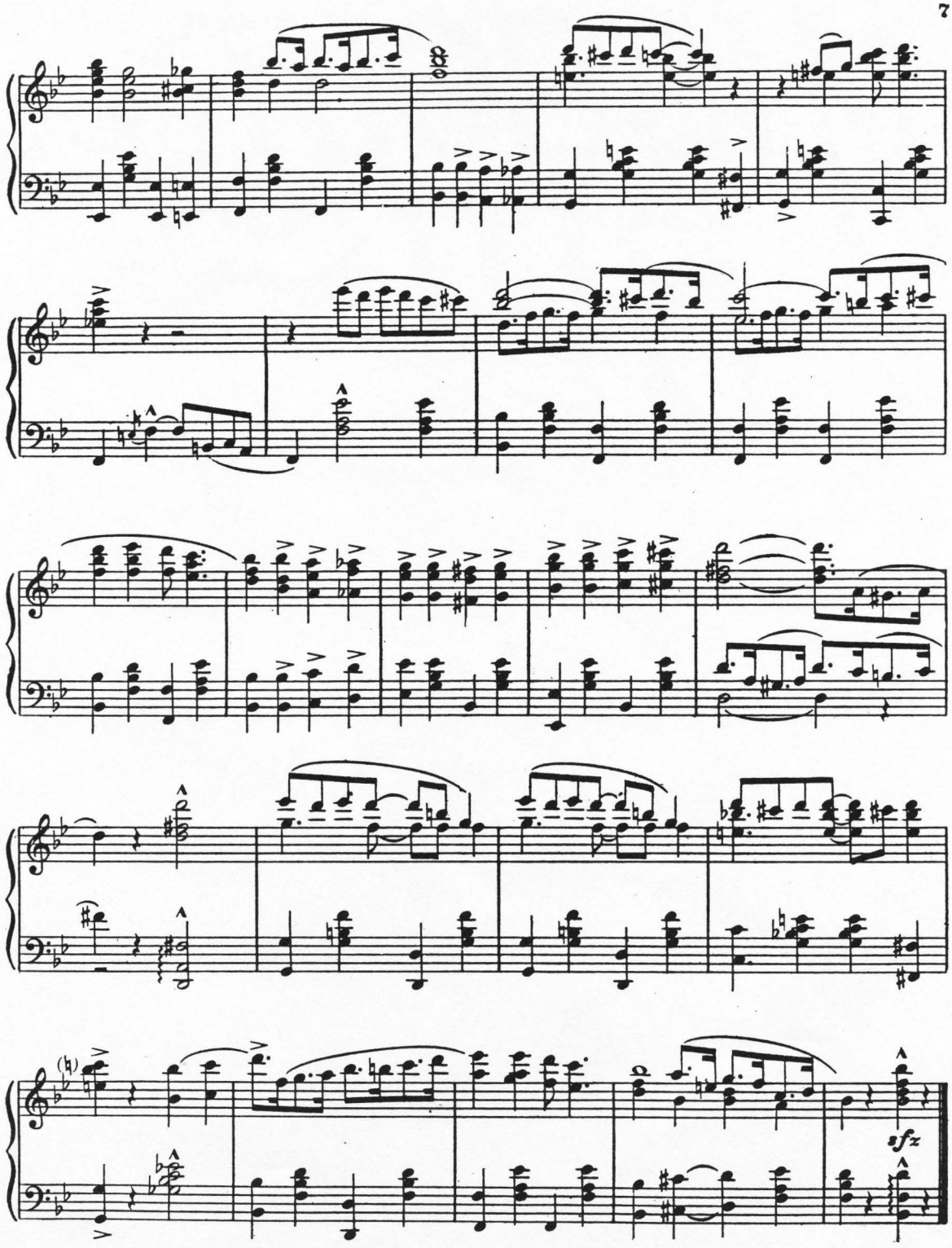
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MISSOURI BLUES

BY
Harry Brown

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